

Excerpts from the speech given by Metropolitan Philip @ the 2007 Antiochian Archdiocese convention in Montreal:

"Since 1966 I have lived with two obsessions: One, the unity of our archdiocese, and second *Orthodox unity in North America* . Where are we now in regard to this unity?"

"Unfortunately, the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America is still divided into more than 15 jurisdictions based, on ethnicity, contrary to the decisions of the first and fourth ecumenical councils. *Our canons clearly state that we cannot have more than one bishop over the same territory, and one metropolitan over the same metropolis.*"

"I regret to tell you that we Orthodox are violating this important ecclesiological principle in North America, South America Europe and Australia. *In New York , for example, we have more than 10 Orthodox bishops over the same city and the same territory.*"

"When ethnic ecclesiology began to flourish and prosper in the 19th century, the Orthodox Church immediately summoned the Pan Orthodox Council of 1872, and condemned phyletism as a heresy."

"How can we condemn phyletism as a heresy in 1872, and still practice the same kind of phyletism in the 21st century here in North America ?"

"When I left Lebanon they were large Greek and Russian Orthodox communities there, but they were not under the archbishop of Athens or the patriarch of Moscow , but under the omorphorion of the local bishop."

"Due to wars, we now have a large Lebanese community in Athens , Greece and they are under the omorphorion of the archbishop of Athens . They do NOT have a separate jurisdiction because they are Lebanese Orthodox."

"Archimandrite Gregorios Papathomas (sp?), a professor of canon law and Dean of St. Sergius Institute in Paris wrote, "The defining criteria of an ecclesiastical body has been its location...it has never been nationality, race, culture, ritual or confession."

"In 1st Corinthians, St Paul writes 'To the Church of God which is at Corinth '....not to the Greek Church'"

"It is wrong to call the Church "Russian," or "Greek," or "Syrian," or "Armenian" because the Church in essence transcends nationalism, race or culture. Here in North America we have a distorted Orthodox ecclesiology because of our ethnic jurisdictions."

"Last year, between Oct 3rd and 6th , **SCOBA** invited many bishops who met in Chicago Illinois to discuss common Orthodox problems. The communiqué issued on October 5, 2006 did not mention one word about Orthodox unity in America . Not one word was mentioned."

"Again in November 2006 a meeting of **inter-Orthodox priests** gathered in Brookline Mass. A draft statement dated January 22, 2007 was circulated and not a word about unity in North America was mentioned."

"I am convinced that serious attempts are being made by some hierarchs in North America and abroad to sweep the whole quest of Orthodox unity in this hemisphere under the rock."

"After the Brookline Massachusetts encounter, one of my Antiochian clergy wrote to me the following, "Two of the Greek priests gave very strong talks on unity. We did decide however that given the landscape, we would use the word "cooperation" and not "unity" in our printed records. This statement, my friends, speaks for itself. I wonder if we are going to remove the word "unity" from the Scripture also? I don't know."

"For the all Holy Spirit working in the Church, there are no dead ends."

"We Orthodox must put our house in order if we want to have a serious Orthodox mission in North America . This unity, ladies and gentlemen will begin with the clergy on the local level. It is up to you, it is up to you and our younger generation to carry the torch and let the light shine."